

All Abuzz: Bees in Australia

Curriculum Links

Science

- Science knowledge helps people to understand the effect of their actions (Yr 3, ACSHE051; Yr 4, ACSHE062)
- Living things have life cycles (Yr 4, ACSSU072)
- Living things, including plants and animals, depend on each other and the environment to survive (Yr 4, ACSSU073)

History

- The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives (Yr 3, ACHHK060; Yr 4, ACHHK077)

The Arts

- Explore and explain works of visual art, including art works relevant to Australia, Asia and other regions (draft document)
- Express understanding about choices made in the creation of media arts works identifying reasons for these based upon features of the works

Cross-curriculum priorities

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Sustainability

About this unit

Bees are a source of fascination– and perhaps fear – for many students. This unit shows us that bees are too busy to be interested in harming us!

In the first lesson, students learn about the members of the hive: the queen, drones and workers. The lesson includes history by exploring the kinds of bees we have in Australia.

In the second lesson students explore how bees communicate by learning how to perform a 'honey bee waggle dance' – this culminates in a treasure hunt.

In the third lesson we explore how people of all cultures through the ages have not just relied on bees for honey but also depicted them as important symbols in art.

Finally, if bees pollinate 30% of agricultural crops, worldwide, what would happen if they died out? With the prospect of Colony Collapse Disorder and justifiable concerns regarding the devastating varroa mite parasite, knowing about bees and not taking them for granted is a valuable lesson for the future.

The lesson finishes with a planting list to encourage and support healthy bee populations in the garden.

Resources

Throughout the unit, students build a report or research notes on bees. To help the teacher, boxes throughout the unit can be copied and cut out for student use, and a list of resources on page 69 provides reliable information about bees.

In the Kitchen Garden Program Syllabus you will also find garden class activities to support this unit, such as garden maintenance to support bee life, and building a bee beach.

Beehives in school gardens

For this unit there is no assumption that you have beehives at your school. Bees naturally visit our gardens and pollinate our plants.

Many schools successfully operate beehives, and if you are interested in having beehives in the school grounds (or perhaps on the roof where their traffic patterns will be completely separate to students) try contacting a local apiary society as well as your Department of Education for advice on regulations, guidelines and risk assessment in your state. Always consult an experienced local beekeeper.

Interview with a beekeeper

In the Shared Table Resource Library you will find an interview with a beekeeper. Lyndon Fenlon, from the Urban Honey Company, talks about fascinating bee facts, how they search for nectar sources, and ways to keep bees in urban spaces, on rooftops. Fabulous bee facts!